

41
THE
MIRACLES
OF
JESUS
VINDICATED.

PART IV.

CONTAINING

A Defence of the Literal Story of JESUS's
healing the INFIRM Man at the
POOL of BETHESDA,

AND

His healing the PARALYTICK, who
was let down thro' the ROOF.

LONDON:

Printed for J. ROBERTS at the *Oxford-Arm*: in
Warwick-Lane. MDCCLXXIX.

[Price Six Pence.]

THE

MIRACLES

OF

THE

VIRGIN

PART II

CONTAINING

A Description of the Miracles of the Virgin Mary

as recorded in the Scriptures and in the Lives of the Saints

by the Rev. Father John G. ...

AND

The History of the Miracles of the Virgin Mary

as recorded in the Scriptures and in the Lives of the Saints

by the Rev. Father John G. ...

Printed for J. ...

London

ob
T
wa
any
fol
oth
Gr
the
pal
Bu
on



THE
MIRACLES of JESUS
VINDICATED.

PART IV.



It is now above four Months since I publish'd the third Part of *The Miracles of Jesus vindicated* in Answer to Mr. *Woolston's Discourses*; the greatest Part of which time I waited to see, whether He had any thing Material to object against what I had advanced in That and the Two preceding Tracts: But finding that no Reply was made by that Author, or his Abettors, (if he had any,) I proceeded farther on the same Subject; and the following Enquiry into the Literal Account of two other Miracles, which that Gentleman had made the Great Objects of his Ridicule, was finished, before the Honourable the Judges of the *King's Bench* had pass'd Sentence upon him for his Infamous Writings. But since a Legal Restraint seems now to be laid upon him; and he is not left at Liberty (I conceive) to
A 2 make

make any Reply for the future, I should have chosen to suppress what was prepar'd for the Publick View, if I had not been encourag'd to think, that the following Sheets contain something which may be of Use for the Information of the Reader.

In my Enquiry into these Miracles I found that something New (to Me at least) offer'd it self to my thoughts; and some Passages which I had met with in my Reading seem'd to give a clearer Solution of the Difficulties started, than the Common one does: Particularly in the Account of the Miracle wrought by the troubling of the Waters at *the Pool of Bethesda*, I found Reason to differ a little from the receiv'd Opinions of the Commentators on that Chapter; and what I have propos'd as New on that Head, I have all along endeavour'd to support by such Authorities as may seem to make my Supposition appear at least not Improbable; This (methinks) may be said with some Certainty, that if I am in the Right, Mr. *W.* is more clearly in the Wrong than upon any other supposition; tho' after all I am very sensible that a Sufficient Answer may be given to all his Objections, without thrusting any Criticism or Conjecture of Mine upon the Reader as necessary in the Dispute.

But before I enter upon the Subject, I think it material to prepare the way with one Observation upon a Piece which Mr. *W.* lately published under the Title of *A Defence of his Discourses* &c. where that Author endeavours to shift the State of the Controversy between Himself and his Opposers. The True Question, upon which I and others closed with him is This, *Whether the Literal Account of the Miracle ascrib'd to Jesus be True*; not, *Whether the Miracle (besides their Literal Meaning) may not have a Figurative and Allegorical one*; much less is it, *Whether the Fathers turn'd all the Actions of Jesus into Allegory or not*: For had he done nothing more than add a Spiritual Sense to them, or had he only try'd to shew that the Fathers delighted in making them

Emblems of whatever their Wit and Fancy suggested, he might have gone on writing as long he pleased, without any Opposers, and perhaps without any Readers.

For what is it to the Cause of Truth whether the Fathers or He could find out more Meanings of *Jesus's* Miracles than the Evangelists thought proper to give us? But Mr. *W.*'s *Discourses* do expressly and frequently deny that the Miracles of *Jesus* were *Truly and Really wrought*; and he asserts, that, *Literally understood, they are full of Absurdities, Improbabilities and Contradictions.* And yet in this *Defence*, p. 26. he would have us believe, in regard to the Story of the *Buyers and Sellers* driven out of the Temple, that *it is to no purpose to support the Letter of the Story against him, unless it can be prov'd that the Miracle neither was nor could be a Shadow or Resemblance of something Future.* And the same he had said before concerning all the Miracles of *Jesus*, *Disc. 2. p. 70. viz. that he who would write against him to the Purpose, must prove two things: That the Fathers did not hold Jesus's Miracles to be Typical and Figurative; and That those Miracles neither will, nor can receive a Mysterious Accomplishment.* On the Contrary, if the Learned Bishop of St. *David's* and other Writers against Mr. *W.* should allow, that All the Fathers did affect to turn *Jesus's* Miracles into Allegory; and if they should allow too, that their Allegories and Mr. *W.*'s are Just and Well-grounded, yet these Writings might be full and proper Answers to His, because they support the Truth of the Literal Story, which he so often and so peremptorily denies: For we may clearly prove the Literal Meaning, tho' we don't attempt to disprove the Allegorical one, if they be two distinct things; as every one of his *Discourses* plainly makes them, while it denies the Letter of the Miracles, and endeavours to set up the Allegory only. If He can consider them separately, so may We; This Liberty I have taken, and shall again take in the ensuing Discourse; perhaps

haps in some Instances I may allow that the Miracles recorded in the Gospel were Typical; for I have no Quarrel with Types and Figures: I only oppose one who would set them up to the Ruin of the Letter; and the Drift of This and my preceding Discourses is only to shew, that the Miracles ascrib'd to *Jesus* were truly wrought by him; and that there is an Account of the Literal Story to be given, which is clear of all the Objections that Mr. *W.* has so unskilfully made to them.

In this view I proceed to consider

I. The Story of the Miracle, or rather Miracles, wrought at the *Pool of Bethesda*; of which St. *John* ch. v. has given us a particular Account, and which Mr. *W.* (a) calls a *Camel, of a Monstrous size for Absurdities, Improbabilities and Incredibilities*, and he has spent above twenty Pages in fixing these upon it.

But for the Clearer Answer to all his Objections on this Head, the Reader is desir'd to observe that in this Narration of St. *John* there are two distinct Miracles to be separately consider'd, That which was wrought by the *Pool* after the Water of it was troubled; and That which *Jesus* wrought upon the *Infirm Man* who lay there: The former is only a Narration, in which our Saviour is not at all concern'd, nor the Miracle which he wrought on the *Impotent Man*: so that if we could not account for the particular Circumstances that attended the Relation of the First, it would not in the least affect the Miracle of our Saviour's healing this Man: the Truth of which Fact only we are engag'd to vindicate. However because This is the Introductory Story in St. *John*, and because Mr. *W.* has been very large and strong in his Objections against the Letter of it, I shall begin there.

1. §. Against the Sanative Virtue of the *Pool* in the Circumstances describ'd by the Evangelist Mr. *W.*

(a) Discourse 3. pag. 33.

J E S U S Vindicated.

7

has made several Objections by way of Question; but before I give an Answer to his Questions, I shall lay before the Reader, what I conceive to be the true Account of the Story; and I do this the rather, because I think that it has not been understood aright by the Generality of Commentators, whose Mistakes on this Article have helped to furnish our Author with some of those Difficulties, which he has so liberally bestow'd on the Miracle.

The State of the Case was this: At *Jerusalem*, near the Place called the *Sheep-Market*, or rather the *Sheep-gate* (mention'd by *Nehem.* ch. iii. 1. and xii. 39.) there was a *Bath* built for the use of such of the Common People, as lov'd to swim and bathe themselves in the Water: This is the proper sense of the Word (a) *κολυμβήθρα*, used by *St. John* on this occasion, and by other Writers, and in the Old *Latin* Version (called the *Italic*) it was render'd by *Natatoria*, a *Bath*, or *Swimming-place*. Nothing was more Common or more Useful than such *Baths* in those warm Climates; *Josephus* (b) mentions some by this very name of *κολυμβήθρα* at *Jericho*, as us'd for the Exercise and Pleasure of Swimming; and it may be reasonably presum'd, that This at *Jerusalem*, and perhaps some others there, was built for the same purpose.

It has (I confess) been commonly suppos'd by Commentators, that this *Bath* or *Pool* (as our Trans-

(a) Thus *κολυμβήθρα* signifies to swim, in *Acts* xxvii. 43. and the old Translation of *Irenæus*, l. 2. c. 22. has *Paralyticum, qui juxta Natatoriam jacebat*: and the Three very Ancient *Latin* MSS. of the Gospels, which *Calmet* says contain the Old *Italic* Version before *St. Jerome* reform'd it, agree in rendring *κολυμβήθρα* by *Natatoria*, as may be seen by consulting the various Readings of those MSS. publish'd by *Calmet* at the end of his Commentary on the *Acts of the Apostles*.

(b) Ταῖς κολυμβήθραις ὅσας ἔστιν, αἱ μεγάλαι περὶ τὴν ἑλὴν ἐτύχαιον, ἀνέψυχον τὸ θερμώτατον τῆς μεσημέρας. *Antiqu. Jud.* l. 15. c. 3.

lation has it) serv'd either for washing of the Sheep before they were led into the Temple, or for washing the Entrails of Beasts sacrific'd in the Temple, or for receiving the Blood from the Trench round the Altar, which was thought to be convey'd hither by some subterraneous Channel; But those who led the way in these Opinions seem to have been (c) deceiv'd by joining, both in the *Greek* and the *Latin*, two words together in Construction, which have no relation to one another; besides, the proper sense of the word *κολυμβήθρα* is inconsistent with every one of these Opinions; and (which is more) these Opinions are not easily reconcileable with the Situation of the *Sheep-gate*, near which this *Pool* stood; for the *Sheep-gate* was on the South-East Wall of *Jerusalem*, and therefore a great part of the City lay between That and the Temple, as the accurate Dr. *Lightfoot* has shew'd in his *Harmony of the Evangelists*, p. 666. On all these Accounts therefore I believe, that what is commonly called a *Pool*, was a *Bath*, built and us'd only for the Sport and Exercise of Swimming; for which it could never have been fit, if it had serv'd for any purpose relating to the Sacrifices of the Temple.

Around this *Bath* were built (as St. *John* says) (d) *five Porches*, or rather *Portico's*, *scilicet* of which sort *Herod* built several at *Tyre* and *Berytus*; and the Design of them all, was for the Common People to walk in them under Covert in the Heat of the Day, if they had no

(c) The Generality of the Old *Greek* and *Latin* Commentators took *κολυμβήθρα* and *piscina* or *natatoria* to be us'd here in the Dative Case, and join'd them in Construction with *προβατικῇ* and *probatîcâ*; in consequence of which Mistake, they thought that this *Pool* serv'd for the Purpose of Sacrifices in some one of the Ways before mention'd.

(d) If the *Bath* or *Pool* was four-square (as That is, which modern Travellers now generally call the *Pool of Bethesda*), Three sides of it had only a Single Portico, and the Fourth probably a Double one; which was the Case of the Outer-court of the Temple, or *Court of the Gentiles*.

mind to *Bathe*; and for such as had, they were of use for them to dress and undress themselves in the Shade: The *Bath* and the *Portico's* therefore serving for this purpose, might well have gain'd the name of *Bethesda*, i. e. the *House of Mercy or Kindness*, because the building them was a great Act of *Kindness* to the Common People, for whose sake they were erected, and whose Indispositions in hot Countries requir'd frequent Bathing. To suppose that they took this Name from any miraculous Cures wrought there; is to suppose without Authority or Occasion, and I submit to the Reader whether Mine is not a more natural Account of the Matter.

At this *Bath*, about the time of the *Feast*, ver. 1. (most probably the *Feast of the Passover*), a great multitude of *Impotent Folk*, of *Blind*, *Halt* and *Wither'd* lay in the *Portico's*, waiting for the moving of the *Water*; for (as St. John says) an *Angel* went down κατὰ καιρὸν (e)

(e) At the season: this is the Literal Translation of the Words κατὰ καιρὸν; and not at a certain season, as we commonly render it, for then it should have been κατὰ καιρὸν τινα. The Words κατὰ καιρὸν are us'd but in one other Place of the New Test. viz. in Rom. v. 6. where we read, When we were without strength, Christ κατὰ καιρὸν dy'd for the Ungodly, i. e. not in due time, but at the time of our being without strength. It is very often that we meet with καιρὸς thus us'd, when the word that should mark what that time or season is, is understood, and not express'd: thus περὶ καιρῶ is us'd in Matt. viii. 29. and xxiv. 45. 1 Cor. iv. 5. and ἐν καιρῷ in Luke xii. 42. and xx. 10. and xxi. 3. and 1 Pet. v. 6. As some Word then may be here understood after κατὰ καιρὸν, so particularly the Feast of the Passover may; for we find many Instances in the LXX, where the time of the Passover is called καιρὸς, as in Exod. xxiii. 15, 17. and xxxiv. 18. Numb. ix. 3. and particularly ver. 7. προσενέσκει τὸ δῶρον Κυρίῳ κατὰ καιρὸν αὐτῆς, to bring a Gift unto the Lord at the season of it, i. e. of the Passover, mention'd in the foregoing verse. From all which I conclude, that the Phrase κατὰ καιρὸν here, must be translated at the season, and that by it may be understood, the time of the Passover or Feast, which the Evangelist had spoken of at the beginning of the Chapter. I have but one thing more to add upon this head, which is, that these two words are not express'd at all in the above-mention'd Three Latin MSS. of Calmet, and Dr. Wilkins says that they are wanting in the Coptick, and many other Versions.

at the season (i. e. of the Passover) and troubled the Water, and whosoever then first after the troubling of the Water stepped in, was made whole of whatsoever Disease he had. This is St. John's Account, and from This it does not appear that the Waters of this Pool, or Bath, had ever receiv'd this miraculously healing Virtue before or after the time of This Feast: The expression, at the season, does (as the Note shews) more Naturally confine it to this Passover, than suppose it to have been a standing and an Annual Miracle: the least that can be said, is, that there is full as much Liberty from the Scripture story to make My Supposition as any other; and Mine has several other Circumstances in its favour, which are a weight upon the contrary Opinion: for whatever is objected from the Silence of the Jewish Writers about this Miracle, is an Argument on my side, as far as it is any Argument: But the Silence of the Jews on this head, in their Discourses with Jesus, has much more weight in it against a suppos'd Annual Miracle of a long standing, it being not very Easy to conceive, why, when They so often insist upon having God for their Father, they don't urge this standing Miracle at *Bethesda*, as a Proof of it; and why they so often mention the Miracles of *Moses*, and the Prophets, without ever once mentioning so Remarkable a thing, as a Miraculous Cure wrought at this Pool, in their own days, for many years together, about the time of the Feast: Whereas upon my Supposition, nothing of this kind can be any Objection; the greater the Silence, the stronger the Proof. But on this head I shall have occasion to say more by and by.

It is well known that the Feast of the Passover lasted eight or nine days, including the Days of Unleaven'd Bread: and possibly this miraculous Quality of the Bath might have begun on the first day of it, or some few days before it: How the discovery of this its healing Virtue came to be made, we are not told: I should rather think that it was owing to Accident

cident than to any divine Revelation; It might be, that some *Jew* of an infirm or otherwise Diseas'd Constitution, bathing one day in this Pool for Pleasure and Recreation, might find himself cur'd all on a sudden, upon such violent Motion of the Water, as troubled it, and as he could not account for, there being no Wind stirring that was strong enough for that purpose. If He was thus cur'd, we may suppose, that upon hearing it others who were Diseased came there the same, or the next day, waiting for the troubling of the Water, and hoping for the same Extraordinary Relief: and what they thus hoped for, they are said to have found, whatever their Disease was, tho' only One, and he the First that stepped in, was cured upon each Motion of the Water: the Report of these Cures added to the former (we may suppose) drew every day greater Numbers together, the Pool being found to have this effect every day, and (for what we know) several times in a day.

From hence it is no wonder, if at length a great Multitude of Impotent Folk, Blind, Halt, &c. was got together at the Pool, when our Saviour passed by, which was on the Sabbath-day, or Third day after the Passover, and might be some days after the Miracle was begun.

This Motion of the Water is said by the Evangelist, to have been caus'd by the *Descent of an Angel* into the Bath; who might therein follow a known Jewish way of speaking, not affirming that an Angel did visibly descend there, but only that there was such a Divine Effect, which (f) in the Language of the Scriptures, and in the Eastern way of Expression, is

(f) Grotius's Note here is, *Non quòd videretur Angelus, sed quòd persuasum esset Judais talia à Deo, nonnisi per Angelos, agi; ita ex motu Aqua presentia Angeli intelligebatur, ut ex Terra motu.* Mat. xxviii. 2. And thus when the Host of Sennacherib was destroy'd in one night (probably by a Pestilential Hot Wind) it is said, 2 Kings xix. 35. that an Angel of the Lord went out and smote in the Camp of the Assyrians, &c. where the Angelical Presence was only Visible in its Effects.

said to be wrought by *Angels*, who are *Ministring Spirits*, and perform the Will of God on such occasions.

This is the Account of the Story which I offer to the Reader, as every way Consistent with St. John's Narration, and in some parts necessarily following from it, and confirm'd by other Good Authorities: and my Account has this peculiar Advantage, that it is clear of all the Difficulties which Mr. W. would fasten upon the Story; For

His first Question is this, *What was the true occasion of the Angel's descent? Was it to wash and bathe himself, or to impart a healing Quality to the Water?* p. 40, 41. And the first part of this Question he founds upon a peculiar Reading of the *Alex.* and other MSS. which have instead of κατέβαινεν the word (g) ἐλέετο: which This great Critick in the Greek Tongue thinks must necessarily signify, that the Angel washed or bathed himself; and therefore must suppose (as he says) *some bodily Defilement or Heat contracted in the Celestial Regions, that wanted Refrigeration, or Purgation in these Waters.* But a little more Knowledge of the Greek Tongue, might have taught him that λείδαι in the most approv'd Authors signifies sometimes no more than καταβαίνειν to plunge, or descend

(g) The *Alex. Med. & Cypr. Greek MSS.* and the *Æthiop. Version*, do all agree in reading ἐλέετο: and this, as it is a Justifiable Reading, may probably have been the True one: for I don't find that καταβαίνειν ἐν τινί is ever us'd to signify to descend into, any where in the New Test. or in the Old Test. LXX. except in *Judg. vii. 11.* where the common Reading is much to be suspected, and a MS. of good Repute gives us εἰς instead of ἐν. In all other places εἰς is constantly us'd after καταβαίνειν, as we have κατέβησαν εἰς ὕδωρ, *Acts viii. 38.* But if we read ἐλέετο ἐν τῇ κολυμβήτρᾳ, this expression is the same with those in *2 Kings v. 10, 12.* and elsewhere. Perhaps the peculiar Sense, which the word ἐλέετο has here, not being commonly known, the word κατέβαινε was put in the Margin of the Antient MSS. as one of the same sense, and more intelligible; and from the Margin it might creep into the Text of the less Accurate Copies of St. John's Gospel. But I offer this as Conjecture only.

into,

into, without having the Idea of *washing* or *bathing* annex'd to it, tho' it be the same Action, which those use, who go into the Water with the design of *washing* or *bathing*: It is probable, that this was all which *Elisha* meant, when he bid *Naaman* the Syrian *wash himself seven times in the River Jordan*, 2 Kings v. 10. But what does Mr. W. think that *Homer* means, when speaking of a Star's rising, he describes it as *καταμύ-
σας Ὠκεανόν*, i. e. *having set or descended into the Ocean?* *Iliad*. ε'. v. 6. Or what does he think that *Virgil* understood by that part of *Homer's* fine Description of a high-mettled Horse broke loose, *Iliad*. ζ'. v. 508.

Εἰσδὼς Ἀνείδ' ὑπὸ πτερὰ ποταμοῖο;
when he imitates it thus in a Parallel Similitude,

— *Affuetus aquæ perfundi flumine noto?*

Æneid. XI. 495.

No doubt but the *Latin* Poet thought that he express'd all that the *Greek* one did; and it is certain that the Sense of both Poets is no more than This, that the Horse us'd to plunge into the Water for the sake of Swimming.

If the Angel then did not descend to Cool or Cleanse himself, and if he did not descend *Visibly* at all, we may see how Mr. W. is more disposed to be Merry than Wise, when he asks, *whether the Angel descended with his Head or his Heels foremost &c.* p. 41.

But still he wants an Answer to the last part of his Question, *Whether the Angel descended to impart a healing Quality to the Water?* If he did (says he p. 41.) *how came it that One only was healed?* To which I have nothing to answer but that it pleas'd God to direct it thus: But if he means, as he seems to do, to expect an Account why All who stepp'd into the *Pool* or *Bath* were not alike heal'd as well as the First, it may be answer'd, that in this case the Miracle of the Story would have been doubted, or deny'd,

deny'd, and by None (it is likely) more than by Him^s self: "A Fine Miracle!" he would cry; "don't make my Medicinal Baths cure various kinds of Diseases, and multitudes of such as labour under each Disease, provided their Case be a Curable one?" It is probable that his Language then would have been of this Sort: "Had only One been cur'd, the First that bathed every Morning, or the First that could get in after some invisible Motion of the Water, then there would have been a Great and Real Miracle? but now the Numbers make the Fact suspicious: it seems to have been a Natural Quality in the Waters, because it is so Universal; to make it appear a Miracle, its Effects should have been Confined and Limited to particular Times and Persons, or be otherwise so circumstantiated, as that the Power of God, and not of Blind Nature, might have appear'd in it." I appeal to the Reader, whether from the Turn and Make of Mr. W.'s Genius one might not expect such Objections as These, if the Case had truly been what he seems to require it should be: and therefore who would quarrel with so Reasonable a Circumstance of the Story as This is?

By what has been said in the foregoing Account of this Miracle, the Reader is prepar'd to see the Captious Nature of some other Questions of this Author, viz. *How often did the Angel descend? How long before Christ's Advent, and why not since?* p. 41. For (as I have shew'd) it does not appear from any part of the Evangelist's Story, nor indeed from any other Good Authority, that this Sanative Virtue of the Pool ever happen'd before or after This Feast of the Passover: 'Till the Contrary be prov'd, let Mr. W. take for Answer, that it seems most probable, for the Reasons before given, that the Pool of Bethesda had this Miraculous Quality only at this Season, and that probably for several days together; whether it did operate above once in a Day, may as well be suppos'd as deny'd, because the Story is silent; all that we know being

being This, that whenever the *Water was troubled*, the Healing Quality took effect on the *First* that stepped in.

But *why not since*, is the Burthen of this Author's Question: Because Providence so order'd it: Is not that a sufficient Answer to a meer Question? Would he have us be *Wise above what is written?* and know the Reason of things for certain, when those Reasons are not assigned? — All that we can do, is to guess; and if any supposition, that we can make, be consistent with the Story, and be favoured by other Parts of the Gospels, and at the same time be such as will effectually answer his Question, I hope that it will be allow'd me to offer such an one: tho' I am far from pretending to lay any Weight upon it, and therefore shall be less concern'd, if it should appear not to have any sufficient Foundation. It is but Conjecture, and as such only I offer the following Account to the Reader.

This Feast of the Passover was the second which was celebrated, and this was the second time too that *Jesus* was present at *Jerusalem*, after he had enter'd upon his Ministry and begun to work Miracles. When he came up the first time, he seems to have had a Design only to celebrate the Passover in obedience to the Law, for he retir'd from *Jerusalem* soon after it was finish'd; and tho' he wrought some Miracles there, yet we are not told whether they were of the Healing kind or not: We don't read that the *Scribes* or *Pharisees* were at that time enrag'd against him, and therefore his Departure from thence into *Galilee* may have been owing to his own Choice of not designing then to come and settle in the work of his Ministry at *Jerusalem*: But when he had gone preaching and healing Diseases thro' all the Cities of *Galilee*, and thro' most other parts of the Country of *Judaea*, he came up at this second Passover to *Jerusalem*, probably with intent to fix his abode there, and shew that he was the *Son of God* by his Power over Devils

Devils and Diseases. What then if we should suppose that Providence (by giving to the *Pool of Bethesda* this healing Quality at or a little before the beginning of this *Feast*) might intend to shew the *Jews* that the Divine Power in *Jesus* was coming among them, and might mean the Miraculous Effect of this *Pool* for an Emblem only or Earnest of what *Jesus* was then preparing to do for them? We find that God did in other Instances prepare the way for *Christ*; the Prophecies of the *Old Testament* were given for this purpose, and *John* the Baptist was declar'd his *Fore-runner*. And why might not This Miracle be of the same Preparatory Nature with Them? I may add too, that this Conjecture seems the more Reasonable, when it is remembred that besides the Cure of this *Infirm Man*, *Jesus* healed another at this *Passover*, who had a wither'd Hand, and retir'd from the City, only because the Pharisees took Council against him how they might destroy him. *Matt. xii. 14.* which when he knew, he withdrew himself from them, *ver. 15.* but if they had not thus wickedly sought his Ruin, before his time of suffering was come, it may be gather'd from the Story as not Improbable, that he would have continued among them a long while, perhaps the whole time of his Ministry. I lay no Weight (as I said) upon all this: it is but Supposition and Conjecture drawn from some Circumstances which seem to favour it: but such as it is, it may suffice for an Answer to Mr. *W.*'s Question, *Why the healing Quality was imparted to the Pool at That time, and not since?* I think it may be said that the Answer is at least as Good as the Question.

When this Grave Questioner of Providence and its Vicegerents asks, *Why no better care was taken by Providence or the Civil Magistrate about the disposal of this Angelical favour, than to leave it to him that could first step in?* p. 42. He may know (if he will reflect a little) that Providence had done enough, and the Magistrate alone is concern'd in the Question: but if this Healing
Power

Power in the Pool was a New thing (as I shew'd it most Probable) and such as had not happen'd many Days, how does Mr. *W.* know that the Magistrates were yet convinc'd of the Reality of the Miracle? Or if they were, is he sure that they thought it proper to limit to particular Persons the Benefit of a Miracle which God had visibly left at large? Or can he shew that the Magistrates, so much employ'd as they must have been at that busy Time of the Passover, had Leisure and Opportunity to make any Regulations about it?

What (says he) *did the Blind, and the Halt, the Wither'd and Paralyticks do there?* p. 45. By which he would intimate that their Condition put them out of all hope of ever being the *First* to *step in*: Perhaps so: But they might have Friends ready there to assist them. And then to what purpose is this Question? We find that the *Infirm Man's* complaint turns upon his wanting such Assistance, and therefore we may suppose that he saw others provided with it; and the more they were, the less likely was he to get time enough to the Water.

There is another Objection, which Mr. *W.* has made, p. 47. made in the proper sense of the word, for it is wholly owing to his own Genius for Criticism: What We translate, *A certain Man was there, who had an Infirmary thirty and eight Years*, he says should, more truly according to the Original, be translated thus, (a) *A certain Man was there thirty and eight Years,* which

(a) The Greek is, Ἦν δὲ τις ἀνδρῶν ἐκεί τετακοῖα χρόνῳ ἔτη ἔχων ἐν τῇ ἀδυνείᾳ: which may literally be render'd thus, *There was a certain Man, who had passed (or been) thirty eight Years in an Infirmary*: But if we joyn (as Mr. *W.* does) the words τετακοῖα χρόνῳ ἔτη with ἐκεί, and suppose the Man to have been there so long, then ἔχων ἐν ἀδυνείᾳ must be constru'd alone, and signify *having or being in an Infirmary*: But there is no Instance of such a Greek Phrase in all the New Testament. On the other hand, if we joyn τετακοῖα χρόνῳ ἔτη with ἔχων ἐν τῇ ἀδυνείᾳ, we have several Expressions of this Evangelist to parallel it, as in Ch. xii. 17. *he found him*

G

which had an Infirmary. This Translation must be allow'd to be *truly* an *Original* one; but all other Truth it wants, as the Reader will plainly see by the Note below; where it appears that Our Version is most Certainly a Right one, and His most Probably a Wrong, I mean as to Grammar and St. *John's* Idiom; for as to the Sense he declares that his Translation brings an Absurdity upon the Story, and for this reason alone it seems as if he chooses it. And yet upon no better a Foundation than such a poor piece of Criticism he falls out with the *Infirm* Man for waiting so long at the Pool, St. *John* is a *Romancer*, the *sick* Man is a *Fool*, and Mr. *W.* rails at His Patience, till he seems to lose all his Own.

I come now to the Last Objection (Mr. *W.* indeed has plac'd it in the Front) against the Truth of this Story, which is, that *Neither Josephus nor any other Jewish Writers have made mention of it*, p. 38.

Now whatever Weight their Silence may have against the supposition of such Miracle lasting among the *Jews* for any considerable Number of Years, yet it favours and strengthens my Supposition; for because no *Jewish* Writer mentions it, therefore it seems to have never happen'd but at this Feast: But perhaps he may expect a Reason, why, tho' it happen'd but once, this *Once* is pass'd over and unmention'd by all the *Jewish* Writers. If Mr. *W.* knows any thing of these matters, he might remember that the *Jews* who wrote in or about *Christ's* time are very few in Number, except the Authors of the New Testament, tho' his Expression *All* would insinuate that there was a great Plenty of them. The Writers of the two *Targums*, with *Philo* and *Josephus*, are *All*; the first of

him τέσσαρας ἡμέρας ἦδη ἔχοντα ἐν τῷ μνημείῳ, having now been four days in the Grave. And in the very next Verse to this which we are considering, it is said of this *Infirm* Man that *Jesus* knew *ὅτι πολὺν ἦδη χρόνον ἔχει, that he had now passed or been a long time in an Infirmary.* And therefore the common Translation is the only one which is *truly* according to the *Original*.

which

which wrote their *Paraphrases* on the Old Testament before this Miracle was vouchsafed to the *Pool*; *Philo* indeed and *Josephus* wrote after it; but *Philo* lived at a great distance from the Fact, as far as *Alexandria* in *Egypt*; and *Josephus* was not born 'till after this had happen'd. Is not here room then to suppose that a Miracle which lasted so few Days (as I have shew'd) might never have come to their Ears? Or if they had heard of it, might not they both have been in doubt, for want of knowing all its Circumstances, whether it was not a Natural Effect rather than a Divine one? Might not *Philo* particularly, who was jealous of the Honour of the *Jewish* Temple in *Egypt*, have look'd upon it as an Artifice of the *Jewish* Priests at *Jerusalem* to shew that God was visibly among them, and to argue from thence that he did not approve of any Temple erected to his Service elsewhere? But for *Josephus* we have not This to say; he was a Worshipper at the Temple in *Jerusalem*, he liv'd and was brought up there, and could not He have known the Truth of the Case? If Mr. *W.* should be dispos'd to ask this Question, I would remind him that *this* Great Historian was not so Fair a Dealer in some Instances, as might be expected. What he wrote, he wrote for the Information of the *Greeks* and Learned *Romans*, who were Heathens, and he seems all along in his Histories to be very tender of dwelling too much upon Miracles: he has omitted the mention of some, and has endeavour'd by Natural Causes to account for others of those very Miracles of *Moses*, which he undoubtedly did Believe and Teach too, as he was a *Jewish* Priest: The Case was, that he was afraid to make his History appear *Incredible* to his Readers, and therefore he softened some things which he was oblig'd to mention, and wholly omitted others which had no Publick Consequence: An Instance of this (among many others) we have in what he says of the Passage of the *Israelites* thro' the *Red-Sea*, that the

Fact might not seem (a) *incredible* (as he expresses himself), he puts in a Doubt, Whether the Parting of the Waters on that occasion was *caus'd by the Command of God, or by the Natural course of things*, and refers (as to a Parallel Event) to what befell *Alexander* and his Army at the *Pamphylian Sea*.

From one of this turn, is it to be expected that He should relate this Miracle at the *Pool*, so much less Remarkable than that of *Moses*? *Josephus's* silence therefore about this Story of the *Pool* is no more an Argument against it, than Mr. *W.*'s Outcries are: It may be True, tho' the One has said nothing concerning it, and notwithstanding all that the Other has said against it.

After all, let Mr. *W.* tell me, to what End and Purpose should St. *John* romance in this particular Story: Did this Miracle do any Honour to *Jesus*? Or had it any necessary Connexion with that which he wrought on the *Infirm Man*? If St. *John* had not known it to be True, or at least if the current Report of the *Jews* had not run this way, would he have mention'd it, when the Cure that his Master wrought was equally the same Miraculous one, whether this *Pool* had ever had such a Healing Quality or not? These Questions I leave with him, in return for the Many which he has ask'd about this Story; and I now call upon him to allow (as he says he will) St. *John's Word* to pass sooner than another Man's, if the Account was not loaded with Improbabilities, p. 39. I have taken the Load off from it, and therefore I hope that he will permit us to take the benefit of his Concession.

2. §. But it is time to come to the other Part of the Story, which we are more nearly interested in, I

(a) Θαυμάσει μὴδὲς τὸ λόγος ὡς εἶδον, εἰ ἀρχαίοις ἀνθρώποις
εὐρέθη σωτηρίας ὁδὸς καὶ διὰ θαλάσσης, εἴτε καὶ βέλησιν Θεῶν, εἴτε
κατ' αὐτόματον· ὅποτε καὶ τοῖς περὶ Ἀλέξανδρον &c. Antiqu. Jud.
l. 2. c. 16.

mean the Miraculous Cure which *Jesus* perform'd upon the *Man who was there at the Pool*, and had had an *Infirmity for thirty and eight Years*.

To this *Mr. W.* objects two things,

That *Jesus* by healing only One out of the great multitude of *Impotent Folk at the Pool*, shew'd either want of *Power*, or want of *Mercy and Compassion*, p. 49, 50. and

That, because we don't know what the *Man's Infirmity* was, there neither is, nor can be proved to be any thing supernatural in it, p. 34, 53.

To the First of these Objections it may be answer'd, that *Jesus*, who knew what was in *Man*, might know this *Infirm* *Man* to be the Fittest Object on account of his Good Disposition to receive and be thankful for such a Gracious Favour; or *Jesus* might consider him as more Helpless than the Rest, because (as the *Man* himself said) he had no one, when the *Water* was troubled, to put him into the *Pool*; or if neither of these two Reasons will satisfy *Mr. W.* that which *St. John* assigns should (one would think) be sufficient not only to answer his Question, but to have prevented it: for *St. John* ushers in the Account of this *Man's Cure* with saying, *Jesus* knew that he had been now a long time in that Case, ver. 6. His Distemper had continued on him for thirty eight Years; and was not that a Circumstance to move Compassion? Might not that justify the singling of him out of the Number, as the properest Object for Relief?

And how does it appear from hence, that there was any want of *Power* in *Jesus*? for surely by the same Power with which he healed One, if it was Miraculous, he might heal Many: all Cures are alike to a Divine Hand: Admit that *Jesus* wrought one, and you must admit that he could have wrought more, if he had pleas'd: when it is said that he could do no mighty works at *Nazareth*, Mark vi. 4. it is not meant that he had not Power to do them, as This Happy Commentator on the New Testament understands it (Disc.

2. p. 15.) but that *Jesus* did not or would not, because they; with whom he was, were not qualify'd with any Good Dispositions to make a right use of them. If Mr. *W.* should think this a Comment of my Own upon the Words, I could shew it to be St. *Matthew's*, ch. xiii. 58. and support it better than He ever did any Comment of his Own; for I could give him Proofs (and those as many as he shall call for) that *ἐκ τῶν αὐτῶν* must necessarily have this signification.

But Mr. *W.* is not so soon satisfy'd; for he goes on to say that St. *Matthew*; St. *Mark*; and St. *Luke* tell us such Stories of *Jesus's* healing Power; as would incline us to think that he cur'd all wherever he came, because he healed all manner of Diseases, p. 50. They may incline a heedless Reader of their Gospels to think so; or a Captious one may say this whether he thinks so or not: For if the Evangelists have said that *he healed all manner of Diseases*, does it follow from thence that they say *he heal'd all wherever he came*? if he cur'd some who were Blind at one time, the Lame at another, and so at different times cured the Diseas'd of every kind, or if he cur'd all sorts at any one time, this is enough to make good the Assertion; all that can be concluded from it is, that there was no sort of Disease which *Jesus* did not shew himself able to cure: And the Evangelists expressly tells us the very contrary to what this Author concludes; for Instance, St. *Mark* ch. vi. 4. says, that at *Nazareth* he could do no mighty works, save that he laid his Hands upon a few sick Folk and healed them; there were others therefore in the same condition whom he did not heal. The Evangelists (I grant) do often speak of *Jesus's* healing all manner of Diseases, as St. *Matt.* ch. xii. 15. says that *when the Multitude follow'd Jesus, he healed them All*; and ch. xiv. 14. that *when they followed him on foot out of the Cities into a Desert place, he was mov'd with Compassion toward them and healed them*. But should it not be consider'd that in both these Cases, those that were healed, were such as followed *Jesus*, and thereby manifested

nifested their Belief that he was come from God, and was therefore able to heal them? In this firm persuasion they left their habitations and *came to him*, as the Learned Bishop of *Litchfield* express'd himself, and thereby guarded his Assertion from that very Exception which Mr. *W.* has made to it: And was This the Case here, at the *Pool*? The great Multitude that was present at it, *Jesus* found there when he pass'd by; they *came not to him*, so far from it that they lay there in hopes of being cur'd by other means than *Jesus's* Power. What then? if some Evangelists say that *Jesus* healed all the sick that *followed* him, does St. *John* give a Contrary Account, when he tells us that at this *Pool* *Jesus* did *not heal* above one of those who did *not follow* him? What Trifling does Mr. *W.* put off with the Air of Argument!

His second Objection to this Miracle is, that *because we don't know what the Man's Infirmary was, there neither is, nor can be prov'd to be any thing supernatural in it.* On the contrary I undertake to shew that let the *Infirmary* have been of what sort soever he pleases, provided he allows it to have been a Distemper, there was a Miracle wrought in the Cure of it. The Original word *ἀδυνεία* is always in the Gospels us'd on these occasions, to signify a Disease or Distemper; and the Fathers generally thought this Man's to have been a *Palsy*; but we will take the lowest Sense of the Word, and suppose it was only a *Weakness in his Limbs*; yet consider that it was Weakness of thirty eight Years Continuance; and as it was a Confirm'd one, so it had prevail'd upon him to a Great degree, for he was forc'd to have his Bed or Chair brought along with him to the *Pool* side. Such was his deplorable condition, and yet upon *Jesus's* only saying to him, *Rise, take up thy Bed, and walk*, we are told that he was *immediately made whole and took up his Bed and walked.* The Cure, you see, was effected in a Moment, and was so Compleat an one, as that from being oblig'd to rest himself on his Bed, he was im-

immediately able not only to walk, but to carry his Bed: And is there here no evident mark of a *Supernatural* Power in *Jesus*? No, says Mr. *W.* p. 53. for Instances may be given of Infirmities of a *long Duration, which in time, and especially in Old Age wear off.* How Old Age should be a Cure, I am not at leisure to enquire; but allowing it, what are such *Instances* to the purpose here? for this Man's *Infirmity* is not represented as *wearing off by time*, but as healed in a moment: and therefore Mr. *W.* contradicts the Evangelist, when he adds, *Who knows but this was the Case of the Impotent Man, whose Infirmity Jesus observing to be wearing off, bid him be gone, and take up his Couch, for he would soon be made whole?* Mr. *W.* may know that this was not the Case; for St. *John* tells him that the Man was *immediately made whole.*

Still Mr. *W.* has one Refuge; for he supposes that such Cures as these may be perform'd without a Divine Power, by the *Help of Imagination* only, pag. 35. This Topick he insists upon here, and elsewhere in his Discourses, and therefore I shall consider it distinctly. That there may in many Cases have been Cures of Chronical Diseases brought about by the help of a strong Imagination, this Author supposes; but without enquiring whether this Supposal of his has any Foundation, I will allow the Fact for Argument's sake, tho' it is much to be doubted, whether he can make good what he has advanced here: But however that be, yet this we may be Certain of, that in every Case which we have any credible Account of, there is one Circumstance which plainly distinguishes them from the miraculous Cures wrought by *Jesus*, viz. They were never effected at once, and in a Moment: But when Surprize, Joy, and a strong Faith that he should be cur'd, had so work'd upon the Patient, as to give a new Turn and Motion to his Spirits, and to the Juices of his Body, he has only begun from that Moment to find an Amendment; and the Impression of the same Passions remaining
strong

strong upon him afterwards, he has recover'd by Degrees, and in Length of time the Cure has been compleated, Nature helping to finish what the Imagination had imperfectly begun: This may be affirm'd to be the true Account of all those Chronical Diseases, such as the *King's Evil*, &c. which this Author supposes to have ever been cur'd by the *Help of Imagination*.

But it is Remarkable, that in this Miracle, which is before us, there is no room to suppose any Help from the *Imagination*; for the Infirm Man did not so much as know *Jesus*, even after he was healed; *he wist not who it was*, that had bid him *take up his Bed and walk*, as *St. John* assures us Verse 13. and when *Jesus* said to him at the Pool, *Wilt thou be made whole?* it is plain by his Answer (*Sir, I have no Man when the Water is troubled*, &c.) that he expected nothing less than to be heal'd by a Divine Power in *Jesus*. In this case then, how could *Imagination* contribute to his Cure? It all lay the other way, against *Jesus's* Power; and if it operated at all, would more naturally have prevented a Cure than forwarded it. Let us never then be told for the future, that this Infirm Man's Cure was owing to *Imagination*, when it appears, that he knew not who *Jesus* was, and was waiting for Relief from another Quarter, of which too he almost despair'd.

From what has been said, it may be concluded that the Cure wrought by *Jesus* upon the Infirm Man, *was and is prov'd to be a Supernatural one, whatever his Infirmary was*; and for this Conclusion, I have not only the Reasons before mention'd, but *Mr. W.'s* own Confession, Disc. 4. p. 9. where, in the *Blind Man's* Case, he allows that *if Jesus had us'd no Medicines, if with a Word of his Mouth, he had cured the Man, and he had Instantaneously recover'd, as the Word was spoken, here would have been a Real and Great Miracle, let the Blindness or Imperfection of the Man's Sight before be of*

D

what

what kind or degree soever. Every Circumstance, which he requires towards making a True Miracle in the Blind man's Case, is exactly found in this *Infirm Man's*; and therefore I hope that Mr. *W.* will be convinc'd, if not by what I have said, yet by what he himself has said, that the Literal Story of this Miracle shews it to be a *Real* and *Great* one.

II. Another Miracle of *Jesus*, which gives great Offence to Mr. *W.* on account of the Literal Story, is (a) his *Healing the Paralytick, who was let down thro' the Roof of the House where Jesus was at Capernaum.*

This Story he calls the *most Monstrously Absurd, Improbable and Incredible of any, according to the Letter*, p 51. This is His way of entering upon every Miracle, he describes every one as the Worst; but the Reader has already seen so much of his manner of handling Miracles, as not to be overborn with such a General Attack as This: What Mr. *W.* has to offer in proof of this Assertion, shall be fully consider'd, after I have laid before the Reader in one View the True Circumstances of the Story.

Jesus came to *Capernaum* (Mark ii. 1.) and entring into a House where he had been accustom'd to lodge, the People of the City hearing of it, gather'd together about the House in great Numbers, so that *there was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about the Door*, ver. 2. On this Occasion *Jesus* being within the House *preached the Word to them*: If he was in a Ground-Room, by the *τα πρὸς τὴν θύραν* must be meant the *Porch* or *Vestibule* of the House; but if he was in an Upper-Room (which is more likely) these Words must be understood of the *Area*, or Court-

(a) Mr. *W.*'s Discourse 4. p. 51. The Story is recorded by St. *Matt.* ch. ix. St. *Mark* ch. ii. and St. *Luke* ch. v.

Yard, or Space between the Outer-Wall and the House it self: And in this Case it may be presum'd that he taught the Crowd from some Window of the Upper-Room, so as that those who were within the Room where he was, and those who were Below in the Yard might all at once hear his Doctrine. The Story being silent about the Floor in which *Jesus* was, we may choose that Supposition which most favours the Literal Account.

It is well known, both from the Sacred Writers and others, that the *Jewish Houses* (as they always are in the Eastern Countries) were built low, having seldom above Two Floors or Stories; and that the Tops of them (called *δωματα*) were not covered with sloping Roofs as Ours are, but were flat, and surrounded with Battlements breast high to prevent falling, as God himself had commanded, *Deut. xxii. 8.* Upon these flat Tops of their Houses the *Jews* us'd to walk in the Cool of the Day, as *David* did, *2 Sam. xi. 2.* or to sit at any Hour of the Day under a Tent or other Cover to serve them for a Shade; thus a Tent was pitch'd for *Abisalom* on the House-Top, *2 Sam. xvi. 22.* And it was not unusual with the *Jews* to perform Religious Worship there, for not only the *Jews* burnt Incense upon them to all the Host of Heaven, as *Jerem.* tells us, chap. xix. 13. but *St. Peter* is said in *Act. x. 9.* to have been praying upon the House-Top about the sixth Hour. And this Custom is farther confirm'd by the Command which our Saviour gave to his Disciples, *Matt. x. 27.* that what they heard in the Ear they should preach upon the House-Tops: Which Command seems to intimate too that the *Jewish Houses* were not commonly higher than Two Stories, for otherwise the House-Tops would have been too high for any to have preached from them so as to be heard.

And as their Houses were thus Low, and the Roofs of them Flat, so there was a Way from within the House out upon the Roof by a Pair of Stairs, at the

Top of which was (a) a Door which lay even with the Roof, but was lifted up upon occasion for a Passage out, and had no doubt some fastening to secure the House from Thieves.

Nor was This the only way up to the Roof, for on the Outside too of the House, the Jews had (as well (b) as other Nations) a fix'd Pair of Stairs or Ladder, by which they could ascend from the Ground to the Roof without entring into the House.

The former of these Assertions appears plainly from our Saviour's Advice to the Jews, when speaking of the Swiftneſs with which the General Destruction was to overtake their Nation, he ſays, *Mark xiii. 15. Let him that is on the House-Top, not go down into the House, neither enter therein to take any thing out of the House.* And the latter Assertion may be fairly drawn from the ſame Words of our Saviour, becauſe the Advice ſuppoſes that there was another and a nearer way of deſcending from the House-Top, which is not to be underſtood (we may be ſure) of venturing their Necks by throwing themſelves down from it; nor can it well be underſtood of any other than a Pair of Stairs or ſtanding Ladder plac'd on the Outside of their Houſes.

This then being generally the Faſhion of the Jewiſh Houſes, was probably the Faſhion of That at *Caper-naum*: where, while Jeſus was preaching to the People, and while the Room where he ſtood was filled, and even the Space about the Door below was crowded with Hearers, a Man ſick of the *Palsy* was

(a) See *Lighſpot's* Quotations to this purpoſe out of the *Talmud*, where it is called *the Way of the Roof*.

(b) Among the *Greeks* too the ſame Cuſtom ſeems to have prevail'd; for in the *Phaniffa* of *Euripides*, *Antigone* goes out of the Houſe, and by a *κλίμαξ* made of *Cedar* mounts up to the Roof, as may be ſeen by comparing ver. 99, 100 and 201 together.

brought in a Couch, or (a) sort of Elbow Chair, by four Persons who carried him: And when his Bearers could not find a Way thro' the Crowd about the Door, because the Multitude was so Great and so very Attentive, they bethought themselves of going round the House, and getting at Jesus by another way; which was, to carry the Paralytick up the Stairs on the Outside of the House, and by that Method they brought him up upon the Roof: When they were got thus far, it seems that they found the Door (or *Way of the Roof*, as the Jewish Rabbins call it) shut and fasten'd, by which they had hoped to convey the sick Man down into the Room where Jesus was. To work then the Bearers go, and force open the Door of the Roof, which St. Mark expresses by ἀπεσείλασαν τὴν στέγην, *they uncover'd the Roof*, i. e. (b) they open'd the Door, which lying Even with the Roof, was a Part of it, when it was let down and shut: And because they us'd Force in opening the Door, St. Luke speaks of them as (c) ἐξορύξαντες *breaking*

(a) St. Mark calls it κράββατος, and St. Luke κλινίδιον: so that these two words are synonymous. Now Hesychius explains the word σκιμπόδιον by εὐτελές κλινίδιον μοινοκότιον, from whence it may be remark'd that there were κλινίδια no larger than for One person only, and of a much smaller size than the word *Bed* conveys an Idea of to an English Reader. And this seems to be the Size of the *Bed* or *Chair* in this place; for tho' Four persons help'd to carry the Sick man in it, yet it was no larger than what He alone could carry, when he was heal'd by Jesus, as appears by the Story.

(b) That this is the Sense of St. Mark's words, appears from considering, that if the Door resembled the Trap-doors at the Top of some of our Houses, and if, when let down, it lay even with the Roof, it was properly a Part of the Roof; and of consequence the lifting or forcing it up was *uncovering the Roof*.

(c) This word ἐξορύξαντες is omitted in the *Camb. Greek MS.* and it is not express'd in the *Old Latin MS.* of the *Abby of Corbie*, nor indeed in the *Syr. Persic.* and *Æthiop.* Versions. But there is no need to suppose the *Greek* word not to be genuine; for we may understand by it, no more than *pulling*, or *forcing* the Door out of its Frame, without any digging, or using of Instruments for that purpose: The *Vulg.* has *parefacientes*, which comes to the same in effect with

ing it up, or rather pulling it out of the Frame. And having done this, they let down the Couch and the Sick Man upon it (probably two of them going first down to receive the Bed, and the other two letting it gently down into their Arms) which in St. Luke's Phrase is διὰ τῶν κεράμων καθήκαν, they let him down thro' the tiling, i. e. thro' the Roof, which, except where the Door was, was pav'd with (d) Tiles: By these means they brought the Paralytick into the Room, and found no difficult matter to place him in the midst before Jesus. Upon this Jesus seeing how great the Faith of this Man and his Bearers was, who had taken so much pains to get at him, was pleas'd, on this occasion, to heal the Paralytick in a Miraculous manner, as the Sequel of the Story assures us.

If this Account be a True, or at least a Probable one, as it seems to be both from the Account it self, and the Notes subjoyn'd to it, we may be able to give a satisfactory Answer to the Charge of Absurdities which Mr. W. has brought in such Plenty against the Literal Story.

He begins with asking, *What did the People so throng and press for? Was it* (says he) *to see Jesus work Miracles? then the People frustrated their own Expectations by not making way for the Paralytick.* But tho' the In-

with ἐξορύξαντες. and does not imply, that there was any digging us'd in the opening of it: but only that the Door was broken open, or pulled out, in which Sense St. Paul uses this very word, Gal. iv. 15. τὰς ὀφθαλμούς ὑμῶν ἐξορύξαντες, pulling out your Eyes, i. e. by force, but not by digging, in the proper and strict meaning of the word. It may be observ'd too that the Couch or Chair not being a Large one (as we shew'd in the Note (a) p. 29) it might be let or carried down, with the sick man upon it, without widening the Passage, or making any Hole about it.

(d) Κέραμοι and τέγϑ, (or τέγν) are synonymous words in the Greek Authors, as Steph. in voce κέραμϑ informs us: who adds, Pollux tradit non suo tempore solum, κέραμον fuisse vocatum ipsum τέγϑ, sed Aristophanem quoque ita appellasse in Cocalo: And the same thing may be observ'd by comparing v. 1286. of Aristoph. Vespe. together with the Note of the Ancient Scholiast upon it,

tent of some that crowded the Door might be to be healed by him, yet it is probable that the Greater part might have come to hear his *Doctrine* (with which St. *Luke* tells us, Ch. iv. 32. that they had been *astonished*, when *Jesus* was the last time among them); and they certainly who came on this Account did not *frustrate* their own Expectations in not giving way to this Paralytick: on the contrary, if they had retir'd to make room for him, then they would have furnish'd Mr. *W.* with more Ground for this Objection.

But he goes on, *Was it then to hear Jesus preach?* No (says he) for *Capernaum* was *Jesus's* own Country, and therefore he was without Honour there. The Fact is false, and therefore his Conclusion from it must be groundless; for *Capernaum* was not *Jesus's* own Country, but *Nazareth*, which the Evangelists justly call so, because he lived there for the best part of thirty years. How unhappy is this Author that he can never once deviate into Truth! It is said indeed by the Evangelists that *Jesus* had been twice at *Capernaum* before this time; but of his first time of going thither we read, that he *continued there not many days*, John ii. 12. When he went the second time, tho' St. *Matt.* ch. iv. 13. says that he κατοίκησεν in *Capernaum*, yet from (d) St. *Mark's* account of the matter it seems as if *Jesus* staid there but one Day and one Night; if I should allow Mr. *W.* the most that he can possibly draw from it, yet his Abode there must have been but for a few Days; and with this Account St. *Matthew's* Word κατοίκησεν well agrees, which may as well be render'd *he sojourn'd* or *housed* there, as *he dwelt* there, as *Leigh* has shewn in his *Critica Sacra*. I confess that, tho' no Evangelist calls *Capernaum* *Jesus's* own Country, yet St. *Matt.* ix. 1. seems to mean this Place when he call it *Jesus's* own City: Here Mr. *W.*

(d) See ch. i. v. 21, 29, 32, and 35. compar'd together.

may think (if he pleases) that I yield up the Point, and grant him, tho' not the same, yet something Equivalent to what he asserted. But I would advise him not to triumph too soon, for I assure him that this Concession will never serve his purpose: Tho' *Jesus* had been but twice at *Capernaum* before this Time we are speaking of, and had staid there so little a while each time, yet after the Cure of this Paralytick, *Jesus* during the rest of his Life frequently went down to *Capernaum*, and made long Abodes there; he seems to have chosen it for the Ordinary place of his Residence, and therefore St. *Matthew* (who wrote his Gospel after the Death of *Jesus*) might properly enough call it *his own City*, tho' it had not a Right to that Name at the time when *Jesus* heal'd there the Man who was sick of the Palsy. So that if *Capernaum* was not *Jesus's own Country* in any Sense, nor *his own City* at that time when the People flock'd to hear him, the Proverb *that a Prophet is without honour in his own Country* is no Objection to this Circumstance of the Story. If the Evangelists may be believ'd, we find that the last time before this Appearance of *Jesus* in *Capernaum*, *all the City was gather'd together at the Door*, where he was, *Mark* i. 33. and *they were astonished at his Doctrine, for his word was with Power*; *Luke* iv. 32. If he left them then in such Amazement, it is no wonder that at this third time of his coming they flock'd about him in great Numbers.

But *why* (says Mr. *W.*) *had not the Paralytick and his Bearers the Patience to wait till the Crowd was dispersed?* The Man at the *Pool of Bethesda* had too much Patience, it seems, and This Man too little: Any thing will serve for an Objection, I perceive; But if this Paralytick and his Bearers had not Patience, to Mr. *W.*'s Size, what is that to the Miracle? And yet perhaps they were not so blameable for their Eagerness, as he imagines: For how could they know but that *Jesus* might leave the City as soon as he had done preaching, and before the Crowd was well dispersed?

If

If this was their Fear, it was no Unlikely one to happen; for when *Jesus* was last among them, the Crowd continued about his Door till *Night* (very probably till late at Night, as the Circumstances seem to shew) and he left the City in the Morning a great while before Day, Mark i. 35. And why might not his Departure be as Sudden now? Thus the Sick man and his Bearers might have reason'd; and if they did, they reason'd better than Mr. *W.* has done in any part of his Discourses, at least than he does in what follows.

If they could not (says he) *get to the Door of the House for the Press, of consequence they could not come at the Sides of it.* Some men have their peculiar ways of arguing, and this Mr. *W.* may call one of His, without fear of Envy. For where is the Consequence? If the Door was crowded, must that whole Side of the House be so too? Or if that Side was crowded, had the House no other Sides? Must it not have had Three others? And why will not he (in pity) allow One of them to have been Clear for the Paralytick to have come up to it? if the Crowd came to hear *Jesus* teach, it seems most probable that they were all got together on that Side only from whence he was teaching.

Well, but the Sick Man (says he p. 57.) *was hawl'd and beaved up to the Top of the House with Ropes and Ladders.* Here he doubts not but he has got hold of an Absurdity in the Literal Story; but he has no fast hold of it, as will appear; for there was no need of *hawling* or *beaving*, of *Ropes* or *Ladders* to be brought, if my Account of the Jewish Houses be a True, or even a Probable one. All that the Bearers had to do, was to carry the Sick man round about by some private way to that side of the House, where the Stairs or Ladder was, which led from the Ground to the House-Top: up these Stairs they carried him with no more trouble than they had been at to bring him down the Stairs of his own House.

Still Mr. *W.* is not satisfy'd, he has Absurdities in Store to charge the Literal Account with; such as *uncovering the Roof, and breaking up Tiles, Spars and Rafter*s; and *making a Hole capacious enough for the Man and his Bed to be let thro'*, p. 57. *It was well* (says he) *if Jesus and his Disciples escap'd with only a Broken Pate, by the falling of the Tiles, and if the rest were not smother'd with Dust*, p. 58. But here Mr. *W.* raises a *Dust* without occasion; for if there was (as I shew'd to be Probable) a Door on the Roof of the House which lay Flat and Even with the Roof, the Bearers had nothing to do but to force and pull it Open: and for this they might only draw some Nails, and take off the Hinges, or they might only break part of the Door or Door-Frame: All which might be done without raising any troublesome *Dust*, or breaking the *Pate* of any one below with the *Tiles*, even tho' we should suppose that this Door of the Roof was directly over the Room, where *Jesus* and his Disciples were: But why may not we suppose that the Stairs up to the Roof, and the Door at the Top of them were *Without* the Room, as they commonly are among Us? If they were, what will become then of Mr. *W.*'s fancied Absurdity? In this Case the raising of some *Dust*, and the falling of a few *Tiles* would fall short of all the mischief which he (it seems) is so very apprehensive of.

Mr. *W.* has (I perceive) look'd into some of our Commentators on this Chapter, and takes Notice that Dr. *Lightfoot* and Dr. *Whitby* have both maintain'd that the Roofs of the *Jewish* Houses were Flat, and had a Door in them, by which the *Jews* us'd to ascend to the Tops of their Houses, p. 58. But he doubts whether what these Learned Men have said comes up to the Case here, and is consistent with the several Expressions us'd by St. *Mark* and St. *Luke* on this occasion: That it is consistent, I have already shew'd; and therefore I shall only take Notice of what he adds, *To indulge them in their Notion, I may ask them, What*

occa-

occasion was there then of widening the Door-way, and breaking down the Sides of it? p. 59. There was no occasion, I believe, nor is any mention made of the Bearers doing this; the word *ἑρπύλλης* (as I said before) necessarily implying no more than that they pull'd the Door open by force: and therefore if these be all the Objections which Mr. *W.* has to make against the Notions of those Learned Men, they may still pass for Able Commentators, in the Number of which Mr. *W.* will never be reckon'd.

All this while (says Mr. *W.* pag. 58.) *where was the Good Man of the House?* He was present, we may suppose; but if so little mischief was done by the Entrance made for the Sick man and his Bed, the Good man of the House had not all the Provocation, which the Question supposes: in Crowds and Throngs Men are content to bear some small Inconvenience: it is generally in vain for them to complain of a Mob, whose Eagerness is too great to be restrain'd by the Outcry of One man: and perhaps this Master of the House might be so attentive to *Jesus's* preaching that he might not perceive what was doing above at the Door, till it was done and the Entrance made; especially if the Door and the Stairs leading up to it were without the Room where *Jesus* and He were: or (it may be) he was Unwilling to disturb such heavenly Doctrine upon so slight an Occasion as the breaking Open a Door, by those, whose only Motive was to bring a Sick man before *Jesus* that he might be heal'd by a Miracle: or (for what Mr. *W.* knows to the contrary) he did call out to forbid their forcible Entrance into his House, tho' to no Purpose: These and many other Suppositions may be made, and any one of them (I think) is an Over-match for Mr. *W.'s* Question.

The last Demand which he has to make on this Head, is, *Why did not Jesus, to prevent this Trouble and Damage to the House, ascend thro' the Door-way to the Top of it, and there heal the Poor Man?* To which

Question he requires an Answer that *will consist with the Wisdom, the Goodness and Honour of Jesus*, pag. 60. But if the *Trouble* of the Bearers and the *Damage* done to the House was so small as I have represented it, no Objection can be form'd from hence to the Disadvantage of any of these Qualities in *Jesus*: For his healing the Paralytick was equally an Act of *Goodness*, whether he went up to the Man, or the Man was suffer'd to come down to Him: The Pains that the Sick man and his Bearers took to get at *Jesus*, shew'd the Strength of their Faith, and on that Account it was not Improper to permit them to shew how fit Objects they were of *Jesus's* Compassion. But I may ask this Author, if *Jesus* had gone up to the Top of the House, and to have wrought the Cure there, he would have had the Crowd follow him there too? if not, then the Miracle would have been wrought upon the Paralytick before a very few Witnesses: Whereas *Jesus* by suffering the Sick man and his Bed to be brought down into the Room, gave an Opportunity to all that were Present of seeing a *Real and Great* Miracle wrought: In this View then *Jesus* certainly did what was *consistent with his Wisdom* and his *Honour* too, for he thereby manifested his Glory, and made a greater Display of the Divine Power that was with him: Nor can it be doubted, but that if *Jesus* had taken the contrary method, and had gone up to the Roof, as Mr. *W.* expects he should have done, Mr. *W.* would have found a much greater Difficulty in that, and have ask'd with more colour of Reason, Why *Jesus* depriv'd so many of his Hearers of the Opportunity of seeing so stupendous a Miracle wrought; and probably he would have concluded, that his healing the Man not before the Company, but upon the House-top where only the Sick man's Friends were present, carry'd with it strong marks of Fraud and Imposture.

Upon the whole then of this Story, it appears to be so far from being *the most monstrously Absurd, Improbable*

ble and Incredible of any, according to the Letter (as he calls it, p. 51.) that I can find no one Absurdity in it, but what arises from his Misrepresentations of it.

In the same manner, in which I have consider'd these Two Miracles, I might proceed to consider the Rest: but I have not Leisure enough for the Work, and perhaps the Reader by this time may be satisfy'd with the Controversy: The Miracles, which I have singled out for Enquiry in This and the Preceding Parts, are such as I judg'd to have something of Difficulty in them, and not to have been sufficiently explain'd in all their Circumstances by our Ablest Commentators; who in so large an Undertaking, as *Theirs* commonly is, had neither Room nor Time to enter into the minuter Disquisitions. But I have examin'd every Particular of the Literal Account of those Miracles, and I can assure the Reader, that in all the Testimonies of Authors, which I have made use of, to support and confirm my Opinions, the Original has always been consulted, and no Trust has been given to Quotations at the second hand: I have seen enough to convince me, that Writers of Great Reputation for Learning are not always to be depended upon in this Case, and therefore to the Fountain I went; for which reason, if at any time I quote Authors in a different manner, or a different Sense from what the Reader may have found them elsewhere quoted in, it is hoped that he will give me Credit so far as to take my Word, or refer himself to the Original for greater Certainty.

At present I have no Intention to pursue this Subject any farther; I would only request the Reader to consider two Things: The one, that the Reality of *Jesus's* Resurrection having been prov'd by uncontested Evidence, by all the Evidence that a Fact is capable of, nay, by such as no other Fact in Nature ever could receive, it requires no Stretch of Faith to believe, that he wrought other Miracles, which are
to

to all human Appearance of a less Difficult Nature; for to heal a Lame or a Blind man, or to raise a Dead man, has nothing so Inconceivable in it, as for a Man to raise Himself from the Dead: And if This be prov'd to have been done, the Other must be readily admitted for a Truth, whatever little Circumstances there may be in the Story, which an Ignorant Man may not understand, or a Perverse one may be able to misrepresent.

The other thing which I wou'd request the Reader to consider, is This; Mr. *W.* has set before him fifteen of the Miracles ascrib'd to *Jesus*, and by his Management of them has represented them as the most *Absurd, Improbable, and Incredible* Stories that ever were deliver'd. Now let the Reader take all of them in this one View; and consider whether it be in the least Probable, that such Authors as the Evangelists are (certainly neither downright Fools nor downright Madmen), in their Accounts of what they declare upon their own Knowledge and Eye-sight, could possibly be guilty of so many Absurdities as Mr. *W.* has charg'd their Narrations with. They either meant to write the Truth of Facts, or they did not: If the First, then we may ask, whence it happen'd that Men writing about what they saw, could fall into such Mistakes as Mr. *W.* supposes they did? But if they knowingly wrote falsehoods, it may be ask'd again, how it came to pass, that they, who intended to deceive, took no more care to secure their Credit, and make their Account Probable? Deceivers (one would naturally think) should contrive to make their Story hang together, and should mention no Circumstances but what they know to be consistent with the Customs and Manners of those, who were concern'd in it. The ordinary way to detect Men of this Character, is to find out that their Contemporaries, who might be as well acquainted with the Facts mention'd as Themselves, have given Accounts, either Inconsistent or Contradictory: But he must be a wretched Impostor indeed,

indeed, whose Story confutes it self, as Mr. *W.* thinks those of the Evangelists do: To suppose this, is to suppose them the very Weakest of Writers and of Men too. And how far they deserve that Character, must be left to the Judgment of every Impartial Reader of their Writings. We see then that Mr. *W.* overthrows all Probability on his Side of the Question, by endeavouring to prove too much: he allows nothing to be Right, all is *Falsehood*, all is *Absurdity*; and yet there can be no greater *Absurdity* in Nature (I think) than in believing, that Men of Sense, who intended to Deceive, took no more pains to give a Colour to their Story, but left it Open and expos'd to all the Objections which the Pen of Mr. *W.* has made against them.

This I mention as a strong Presumption against what he has advanc'd: But when it is farther consider'd what Answers I and others have given to his suppos'd *Absurdities*, I hope that every Unprejudic'd Infidel will give a Fair hearing; and that every Serious Christian will be the better confirm'd in his Belief, that *the Literal Account of all the Miracles of Jesus is True*, and that they are a Demonstration, that *the Power of God was with Him*.

F I N I S.



